

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. 1-102 (Cancelled)

103. (New) A method of prophylactically treating a condition, comprising:  
contacting a first area of a subject with a metal-containing material to reduce the  
occurrence of the condition at a second area of the subject,

wherein:

the first area is different from the second area;  
the first area comprises a mucosal membrane selected from the group  
consisting of the subject's oral cavity and the subject's nasal cavity;  
the condition comprises a respiratory condition; and  
the metal-containing material comprises a metal selected from the group  
consisting of silver, palladium, gold and combinations thereof.

104. (New) The method of claim 103, further comprising:  
recognizing a possibility for occurrence of the condition at the second area of the  
subject; and  
after, recognizing the possibility for occurrence of the condition at the second area  
of the subject, selecting the first area of the subject for contact with the metal-containing material  
to reduce occurrence of the condition at the second area of the subject.

105. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the second area is substantially free of the condition when the first area is contacted with the metal-containing material.

106. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the second area has the condition when the first area is contacted with the metal-containing material.

107. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material is selected from the group consisting of metals and alloys.

108. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material is selected from the group consisting of metal oxides, metal hydroxides, metal nitrides, metal borides, metal halides, metal carbides, metal phosphides, metal silicates, metal nitrates, metal carbonates, metal sulfides, metal sulfadiazines, metal acetates, metal lactates, metal citrates, metal myristates, metal sorbates, metal stearates, metal oleates, metal glutonates, metal adipates, alkali metal thiosulphates metal hydrides combinations thereof.

109. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material comprises silver.

110. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material comprises an ionic material.

111. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material comprises atoms, molecules or clusters.

112. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material comprises an atomically disordered, crystalline metal-containing material.

113. (New) The method of claim 112, wherein the metal-containing material comprises a nanocrystalline metal-containing material.

114. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material comprises a nanocrystalline metal-containing material.

115. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the respiratory condition comprises pneumonia.

116. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein, when contacted with the subject, the metal-containing material is in a solution.

117. (New) The method of claim 116, wherein the solution contains at least about 0.001 weight percent of the metal-containing material.

118. (New) The method of claim 117, wherein the solution contains about 10 weight percent or less of the metal-containing material.

119. (New) The method of claim 116, wherein the solution further comprises a solvent.

120. (New) The method of claim 116, further comprising:  
forming the solution into an aerosol; and  
inhaling the aerosol.

121. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein, when contacted with the subject, the metal-containing material is disposed in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

122. (New) The method of claim 121, wherein the composition contains at least about 0.01 weight percent of the metal-containing material.

123. (New) The method of claim 122, wherein the composition contains about 50 weight percent or less of the metal-containing material.

124. (New) The method of claim 121, wherein the pharmaceutically acceptable carrier is selected from the group consisting of creams, ointments, gels, sprays, solutions, drops, powders, lotions, pastes, foams, liposomes and combinations thereof.

125. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein, when contacted with the subject, the metal-containing material is in the form of a free standing powder.

126. (New) The method of claim 125, wherein the free standing powder is inhaled.

127. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the second area comprises the subject's lungs.

128. (New) The method of claim 127, wherein the condition is nosocomial pneumonia or ventilator-associated pneumonia.

129. (New) The method of claim 127, wherein the metal-containing material is in the form of a solution when contacted with the subject.

130. (New) The method of claim 127, wherein the metal-containing material is in the form of a swab, a sponge, a foam, a liposome, a tape, a pill, a capsule, a tablet, a suppository or a lozenge when contacted with the subject.

131. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the first area is substantially free of the condition when the first contacted with the metal-containing material.

132. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the first area has the condition when the first contacted with the metal-containing material.

133. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material has a prophylactic ratio of about 0.95 or less for the condition.

134. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material is selected from the group consisting of silver nitrate, silver hydroxide, silver sulfadiazine, colloidal silver, silver carbonate, silver oxide, silver acetate, silver lactate, silver citrate, silver succinate, silver chlorate, silver sorbate, silver myristate, silver stearate, silver oleate, silver glutonate, silver adipate, alkali silver thiosulphate and combinations thereof.

135. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the condition is nosocomial pneumonia or ventilator-associated pneumonia.

136. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material is in the form of a solution when contacted with the subject.

137. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material is in the form of a swab, a sponge, a foam, a liposome, a tape, a pill, a capsule, a tablet, a suppository or a lozenge when contacted with the subject.

138. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein the metal-containing material is in the form of an aerosol, and the method further comprises inhaling the aerosol.